

BizBaz promises lots of fun this weekend

By Tabitha Wells

These days, it can be all but impossible find full-day events that cost nothing for a family to attend, but can provide entertainment, shopping, food and a full day of excitement for all.

But what if there was an event like that? A place that features all kinds of unique vendors and demonstrations, food, sports, contests and more? And what if it was easy to get to?

This year, there is. The event is called Bizarre Bazaar (BizBaz for short), and was inspired by a similar event in Kenya that has been running for the last 15 years.

BizBaz, which will be held this Saturday and Sunday (July 25 and 26) at the Osprey Valley Golf Course near Alton. It will feature artisans, both local and from abroad, as well as exciting and unique vendors, interesting demonstrations, contests, displays, information, games and more.

Taking place in the rolling hills of Caledon, it's an opportunity for people to learn, participate, socialize, eat, drink and shop from more than 70 artisans who are slated to be on hand.

"Bizarre Bazaar is being positioned as a very unique experience in Caledon," explained Vandi Hill, one of the two creators of BizBaz, in an interview with the Citizen earlier this year. "It's a place where people can come, they can experience . . . eat, drink, buy fabulous art from our local artisans and beyond, and have a lot of fun."

Part of the tagline of their advertisements is "Where else can you get a tattoo, eat crickets, see a drone, hit a golf ball, have some cider, pat an alpaca, play kin-ball, get your nails done, or just sit and soak in the atmosphere of one of the most beautiful golf courses in Ontario?"

The answer, of course, is that there isn't another event like it.

Currently, there are more than 150 total exhibitors lined up to be a part of this weekend-long event, providing a little bit of something that meets everyone's individual tastes.

But this event is about more than just experiencing the incredible features of the bazaar, it's largely about the social aspect. Spending time with family and friends in the picnic areas, while you relax and enjoy food and drinks, or taking the time to chat up the exhibitors to learn more about their work and their products.

In a recent press release, the creative minds behind BizBaz announced the creation of BizBaz Mini-Putt, six holes created in partnership with teams of local organizations and artists, including Pan Am Caledon and Jennifer McKinnen; DAREarts and Ken Hall; Caledon OPP and James Peglar; Food and Water First and Rosemary Hasner; Headwaters Tourism and Gabrielle Fischer; and Glen Williams Mill with their resident artists. Visitors to Bizarre Bazaar will not only have the opportunity to play all six holes, but will be able to vote on their favourite as well.

The event takes place the last weekend of the Pan Am Equestrian events held in the area, and is supported by the organizational team in Caledon as one of their key events connected with the Pan Am happenings locally, providing an incredible opportunity for the local businesses and artists participating to get some exposure.

BizBaz is free to attend (and to park at) - something that makes it affordable for families of all sizes. It features a kid-zone, is dog friendly, and includes activities like fly-fishing and tying, airbrush body art, archery and music throughout the day from 401Radio. There will also be great opportunities for people to show off their mad fishing and golfing skills, with Cabelas giving away three baskets a day for the fishing derby, and The Gould Team, part of RE/MAX, will be running a putting contest on the golf green Saturday. Each golfer will have the chance to putt three golf balls toward several panels with point values. The winner of the playoff, which will take place Sunday, will receive a cash prize of \$5000.

What the organizers, Hill and Heidi von der Gathen, are hoping to create is the kind of event atmosphere that draws people back each year. They hope it will become the kind of event where people say "Hey, BizBaz is on again - let's meet up and spend the day there!"

And if the event is able to deliver on the excitement they have drummed up, there is no doubt it will have that kind of lasting effect. BizBaz will be held 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. both days at the Osprey Valley Golf Course in Caledon. Parking and admission are free. For more information, or to see a list of exhibitors and vendors, visit www.bizbaz.ca